

# SACRED DANCE GUILD NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT: MRS. WARREN T. JOHNSON (MARY RHODES), BOX 177 PETERBOROUGH, N. H.

EDITOR: MRS. WALTER A. TAYLOR (MARGARET FISK), 7 FORT STREET, ATHENS, OHIO

SEND \$3.00 ANNUAL DUES (PAYABLE EACH FEBRUARY) TO MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN, MRS. ALLEN HOLLIS, 567 HANOVER ST., FALL RIVER, MASS., 02720. THE DUES COVER THE SUBSCRIPTION TO THE THREE ISSUES OF THIS NEWSLETTER IN APRIL AND SEPTEMBER, 1965 AND IN JANUARY, 1966. YOUR \$3.00 MUST BE PAID IN ORDER FOR YOU TO RECEIVE THE NEWSLETTERS.

New York City      SACRED DANCE GUILD      January, 1966  
February 25, 26, 1966

SEMINAR-REPORTS      BOARD MEETING      WORKSHOP - ANNUAL MEETING

Friday at INTERCHURCH-CENTER--

Saturday at CHRIST METHODIST CHURCH

FRIDAY at Interchurch Center - 475 Riverside Drive

1 P.M. Room 705 open

2 - 3 P.M. Time to renew friendships and get acquainted with each others' books, pamphlets, orders of services.

BRING TO SHARE: (in these categories)

a) for display only - not to be removed

b) sample or duplicates - help yourself

c) for sale or to order

REGISTRATION: Guild members & students \$4.00; non-members \$7.00  
(this covers the two days)

3:00 WELCOME and Opening services of introductions, announcements, worship  
President, Mary Johnson, (Mrs. Warren T.)

3:15 PANEL DISCUSSION      Leader, Pat Sonen (Mrs. Robert W.)

A. WHERE ARE WE IN SACRED DANCE? with reports from the field including Drid Williams of U. of Wisconsin, Virginia Lucke and Susan Lundburg of Michigan, Margaret Taylor of Ohio, as well as other leaders present. La Meri will be with us, also Dr. J. Blaine Fister, staff associate of the National Council of Churches, and possibly representatives of The Christian Society of Drama.

B. AND WHITHER CAN WE GO? or ARE WE GOING?

This may be a significant second chapter in our dialogue with The National Council. Come prepared to speak - in words or motion.

5:00 BOARD MEETING of The Guild  
(to be continued after dinner if necessary)

6:30 DINNER

7:45 Reconvene for further exchanges of ideas and possible presentation of one or more areas of church-oriented religious dance groups in N.Y.C.

9:45 - 10:00 Closing devotional meditation

SATURDAY at Christ Methodist Church - Park Ave. & 60th Street

9-9:30 REGISTRATION Members & students \$3.00, non-member \$5.

9:30 Warm-ups \* (see note on following page)

9:45 - 12:00 WITH LA MERI ON CHOREOGRAPHY      1:50 - 4:45  
(afternoon schedule on next page)



2.

\*After Warm-ups at 9:30, it is requested that each choir &/or leader be prepared, if and as called upon, to present a very brief number as actually given, or might be given, in a worship service, as: a call to worship, a prayer response, the doxology, a single or multiple amen, a hymn or brief anthem, psalm, poem or prayer.

12 - 1 P.M. LUNCH cafeteria available

Leaders available for consultation at this time (note panelists of Friday, plus Esther Ellison on music)

1 - 1:45 ANNUAL MEETING

Choir members in preparation for closing service with  
Drid Williams

4:50 Closing announcements and worship

5:00 Farewells to choirs, organizational and committee meetings as needed.

DON'T MISS A MOMENT AT THIS ANNUAL MEETING AND WORKSHOP, Feb. 25, 26  
Please fill out your PRE-REGISTRATION on the pink sheet

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La Meri, dancer, choreographer, author and teacher has presented dance concerts "literally all over the world", yet stayed long enough to do research into the native dances of each country, and eventually became recognized as the greatest authority on ethnic dance in the world." Columbia University Press published her monumental book, "Classic Gesture Language of the Hindu Dance" in 1942, reprinted in 1965. She was co-founder of the Ethnologic Dance Institute in N.Y.C. and was its director from 1944-1955.

"Having choreographed all her own solo dances, . . . she began to choreograph group works steadily . . . The list of her creations is formidable . . . for the May music festival in Florence, the Juillard School of Music, Connecticut College and Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, serving there on the faculty for many years, for Carola Goya and Matteo and for worship rhythmic choirs." One of the most dramatic dance dramas which I and my young adults have been privileged to experience was La Meri's presentation and lead role in "Swan Lake" in the classic technique of Bharata Natyam at Jacob's Pillow, summer of '64, unbelievably beautiful, and wholly acceptable to our western oriented young people. "Out of more than thirty five years of highly successful choreography she has distilled the principles stated in her book Dance Composition - The Basic Elements (Eagle Printing and Binding Co, Pittsfield, Mass. 1965). Our workshop members will be privileged to have La Meri on Saturday.

La Meri's sense of humor, concern for each student and quick evaluation of a situation as well as her sincere interest in religious dance should help to make her time with us a real gateway to greater beauty and creativity.

Other books by La Meri include: Principles of the Dance-Art, (1931); Dance as an Art Form, (Barnes, N.Y. 1935)

Program Committee:

Hartford area. Esther Ellisson, Beverly Hall, Betty Simpson,  
Helen Gray, Pat Sonen, consultant.



# INFORMATION ON THE FEBRUARY WORKSHOP AND ANNUAL MEETING

TRANSPORTATION: to reach Interchurch Center, 475 Riverside Drive  
 Grand Central: Cross-town shuttle to Times Square, then IRT  
 Broadway & 7th Ave. Uptown Express to 96th and  
 transfer to local to 120th St.; walk 2 blocks  
 west on 120th St. to Riverside Drive  
 Port Authority: Walk through tunnel to Times Square, IRT line  
 Broadway & 7th Ave. subway & proceed as above.  
 Parking: on the street or in Riverside Church parking lot.

TRANSPORTATION: to reach Christ Methodist Church, Park Ave. & 60th  
 Cross-town 60th going west; cross-town 57th going east.  
 Lexington Ave. train debark at 59th St. (not clear to me!)  
 You can get more directions at the Friday meeting. O.K.?

CLOTHING: Most prefer leotards and tights, but any clothing which  
 permits freedom of movement is acceptable.

## HOTEL SUGGESTIONS:

Hotel	Address	Single rates	subway	bus
Murray Hill	42 W. 35th St.			
Tatham Hse. (YWCA)	138 E. 38th St.			
Abbey	151 W. 51st St.	8.50-11.00	IRT at 50th	
Belmont-Plaza	49 & Lex. Av.	8:50-16.00		#5 57 & 6th
Park Crescent	Riversd. Dr. at 87	8.00-15	IRT (L) at 86th	#5 at 86th & Rivs.

## DRID WILLIAMS - One of the Leaders at the N.Y. Workshop

Drid Williams will participate in the Panel and will work with those attending the workshop. She will be new to many of us. She is Dance Specialist, Extension Division, 401 Extension Bldg., 432 Lake St., Madison, Wisconsin.

Drid has been a co-worker with Forrest Coggan in extension work in Madison. She is director of the Madison Dance Group which is composed of 2 men and 4 women. It is an inter-racial group whose participants are involved in student and community lives. This group is interested in the intensity of communication which can be offered through the expressive medium of movement.

Forrest Coggan writes, "I know the quality of this group is equal or highest of any in the country. 'Professional' but dedicated group of well-trained dancers."

The Madison Dance Group travels to present programs. It offers 3 services in dance for churches of all denominations. The Sacred Dance Choirs and Rhythmic Choirs in Michigan are planning to have this group in Grand Rapids on Sunday, May 16, 1966.

Drid Williams' group has been taped at the University of Wisconsin from WHA-TV on a program titled "Religious Perspectives." It may be available on NET.

We look forward to meeting Drid as a person and an artist.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### WHAT OUR MEMBERS ARE DOING

Virginia Lucke, East Congregational Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan, reports that 8 girls presented "Angels We Have Heard on High" in the family Christmas Eve service.

For Youth Sunday on Jan. 31 at the 9:30 and 11:00 A.M. services 9 members will present the Lord's Prayer to a new musical accompaniment.

She is introducing rhythmic activities into a thirty minute period on Sunday mornings. Before Christmas they did circle dances to carols; now they enter into dramatic movement.

Nels Anderson of Saginaw, Mich. writes:

For Christmas Eve midnight service we gave "Carol of the Bagpipers", based on the custom of bagpipers coming down from the hills into Naples to play carols in the streets. This carol tells of the miraculous signs that led shepherds and kings to the Holy Birth.

For one of our youth programs, we did "Sing Hosanna, Hallelujah" which is a rather novel and exuberant song. We used the recording by the New Christy Minstrels.

Mrs. James Brooks of Holland, Mich. Rhythmic Choir presented two Christmas programs at the Hope Reformed Church and at Central Reformed Church, Muskegon. A discussion period followed in Muskegon.



## WHAT OUR MEMBERS ARE DOING

Pat Sonen (47 Cleveland St., Orange, N.J.):

For a special children's worship service for the Northshore Unitarian Society, Plandome, N.Y. I used a congregational chant as well as dance. It was an experimental use of percussion and involvement of the children who filled the modern and colorful church auditorium on a Sunday morning. Hoping to dramatize the theme, "No Man Is An Island", in as many ways as possible the service opened with the beat of a drum, followed by a dance interpretation (by the Orange, N.J. Unitarian Dance Choir), song with guitar, a story taken from the life of Jesus and highlighted by chanting a phrase: "There is More to a Man than what the eye can see." Using percussion sticks I beat out the 12 counts to the phrase for them and asked them to join me by clapping their hands and speaking the words. During the practice time a voice went off the beat (one two three, one two three, one, one two, three, four, five) and much to my surprise when I said that we must try it again because somebody goofed, I saw a small hand raised from the depths of that sea of children before me. "It was I" rang out the voice. I acknowledged him somewhat stunned, but mostly amused. We rehearsed the chant again. When we were prepared, and it took only a few runthroughs, we started our chant (still using sticks and clapping) very softly and gradually rose to a mighty crescendo (which almost took the roof off) and then dropped down again gradually to a whisper and then finally only the soft clapping of the rhythm echoed in the magically still auditorium. I know we are concerned here mainly with dance - but as we give a message through the dance medium in churches, I feel the use of instruments, chants and voice can leave an indelible impression as well - and certainly the involvement of the congregation is an exciting thing to behold. Yes, even the adults present joined in.

We sacred dancers yearn for and are in need of a feed-back from the congregations. After all it is for the people and the enrichment of the worship service that we present this art form. Did they understand our presentation? Did they find further involvement because of the dance? The strangest feed-back I received was overheard following a Creative Worship Service with dance for the Lower Bucks Unitarian Fellowship, Levittown, Pa. recently. One young woman was saying to a friend, "Usually during the church service I plan my supper menu for the day. Today I just didn't have time to think about it!" (I hope that family got something to eat that night!)

Gladys Kantor, for a special Family Christmas Service in the Unitarian Church of Southern New Jersey, Cherry Hill, N.J., danced an interpretation of "Mary Speaks" written by Pat Sonen with original music by Tryggvie Bjornson, of Orange, N.J. Gladys is starting a dance choir in her church and preparing for special services.

Constance Fisher of California Western University, San Diego, Cal. has developed the art of Sacred Dance with her California W. U. Sacred Dance Choir which covered the Pacific Coast from border to border with programs. Her graduates have carried this means of expression to seminaries and churches in this country and to other parts of the world such as Hong Kong and the Congo. Connie continues with the three youth choirs at Wesley Methodist Church also. Her 15 member Choir interprets both early forms of ritual and contemporary expressions of religious ideas.



## 6. WHAT OUR MEMBERS ARE DOING

Shirley Fritz, Troy, Ohio, director of Choir in the Church of the Brethren:

In Oct. for World Wide Communion Sunday we selected "Let us Break Bread together" using movements of communing together - on our knees at times, showing humility, and yet with our faces "to the rising sun" showing hope and praise at other times, and closing with a prayerful mood asking for mercy. A negro friend sang the spiritual and she added great feeling. We wore black robes and red stoles. After we had completed the symbolic movement we actually did gather at the communion table and entered into the Eucharist. When we knelt for communion the singing choir immediately followed and knelt and then the whole congregation knelt without any hesitation upon direction from the pastor. It was most moving for our congregation.

On Oct. for a youth sectional gathering we presented "The Lord's Prayer" to the recording of the Twentieth Century Folk Mass. We wore black tights and leotards and gold tunics.

For Thanksgiving for the call to worship we used the "Praise and Thanksgiving" round.

For Christmas midnight service we danced with expectancy to "Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella".

During December I worked with the Brownie group teaching them some movements for carols which they took to the hospital, the children's home and the home for the aged, etc.

So, you can see how this is bursting forth in my life. It is too much for pen and words and I am so grateful for this expression. It cannot be contained and must be shared.

Rachel Scott of the United Church of Christ, Newaygo, Mich. has been active with various groups in her church. A high school group interpreted the United Church Statement of Faith for the dedication of their new building in October.

"For Christmas we had a group of 7th and 8th graders who worked out a medley of three carols, 'Bring a Torch, Jeannette', 'Ye Shepherds, Leave Your Flocks' and 'Hark, the Herald Angels'. The five girls, (dressed in peasant-style skirts, blouses, head scarves and white knee socks), approached from all parts of the sanctuary to the chancel, circling the large creche figures. Then the boys, (in white shirts, dark pants and kerchiefs knotted at the neck), approached during the second carol. They conveyed the weary plodding of shepherds changed to joy as they reached the figures. The girls showed the contrast of bouncing vigor of village maidens changing to awesomeness. They all portrayed the last carol with circle dancing.

"The youngsters took an active part in the creation of their interpretations and seemed to get the feeling of what it was all about. This was a lot of fun for me, and I think the seven and I have built personal bridges to one another that may be very fruitful in other ways."

Cora Miller Wells, St. John's Unitarian Church, Cincinnati, Ohio, presented a Christmas Family Night Service on Dec. 17. The children were invited to skip around with the dancers who came down the aisles with strands of bells.

Clarke Wells will be the pastor of the First Unitarian Church in Portland, Oregon in September; so the west coast will be enriched by the skill and depth of Cora, for surely she will continue with dance and motion choirs wherever she lives. She has had men and women in her active Performing Group in Cincinnati.



Mary Jane Wolbers, E. Stroudsburg, Pa., presented a workshop and vesper service on November 21 sponsored by the Worship and Fine Arts Com. of Yonkers Council of Churches. The workshop on "The Dance in Religion" was held at 4 P.M. in the West Center Congregational Church, Yonkers, N.Y. At 5:30 there was a showing of the film "It is Well with My Soul" which presents a work by Madam Futagawa of Japan. At 7 P.M. the Vesper Service in the Sanctuary was presented by Mary Jane with the assistance of the Contemporary Dance Club of E. Stroudsburg, Pa. This dance choir contributed the Processional, Introit, Call to Worship, "Priest and Prophet" (Hardina), Benediction and Recessional. Mary Jane spoke on "The Dance as a Dimension of Worship". Patricia Cherego and Tommie Jordan gave Rachmaninoff's "Triumph: Thanksgiving".

The Contemporary Dance Club is in its third performing year. It is open to men and women at East Stroudsburg State College. It meets for two hours each Tuesday evening and it participates in many programs. Among its spring programs will be:

Feb. 13, Vesper Service at Muhlenberg College, Allentown, Pa.

Mar. 6, Vesper Service at Salem United Church, Harrisburg, Pa.

Mar. 27, Program of international dances for children at Temple Israel, Stroudsburg, Pa. This will be for the Hebrew Sch. and will be an internationally oriented program of religious dances.

Mary Jane adds that she was soloist at the Annual Christmas Service of the Methodist Church of E. Stroudsburg on Dec. 19, 1965.

Carol B. Davis, director of the Motion Choir, First Parish Church in Dorchester, Mass: (activities in 1965 summer & fall):

July: Dance counsellor during a 2-week junior high camp at Ferry Beach (Unitarian-Universalist) Saco, Maine. Produced:

(1) An original dance-worship reading written for the occasion by a participating minister-counselor. in C.

(2) Reading "Common Bands" with organ acc.: Bach's Prelude

(3) The Lord's Prayer (Malotte)

October: The Story of Ruth. The director and one senior choir member in the roles of Naomi and Ruth to "Whither Thou Goest" by Singer.

November: The Pilgrim Story (the Farewell, the Voyage, the Arrival) to Dvorak's "New World Symphony" (selections).

Joan Johnson, 9231 Elliot Ave. So., Bloomington, Minn., writes:

I started our Worship Choir on Sept. 13 and now have 17 members:

6 boys and 11 girls. About seven are former members and the ages range from 14-21 years. They are working well together. (Lutheran)

Virginia Huffine and Robert Storer of First Parish Church of Winchester, Mass, have presented an interpretation of the Annunciation from Luke. Virginia dances; Robert reads.

At a recent Centennial celebration of their church, the dance group in the Winchester church with the Junior Choir and Senior Choir danced a dedication anthem with "America the Beautiful" as the tune.

Dorcus Bendix, Salem Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minn., writes:

I've been really keeping the pace with two services with my Motion Choir in November, 3 in December and 2 more coming up in February and an invitation to go back to Augustana College in the spring. Dorcus is also the organist and choir director in her church.



## WHAT OUR MEMBERS ARE DOING

Margaret Fisk Taylor

This fall:

- Oct. 16 Workshop at United Church of Christ, Medina, O.;  
 Oct. 23, 24 & Nov. 6, 7, at Grace Meth. Ch., Dayton, O. (ch., Y. & A.)  
 Oct. 29, 30 Workshop for Phila. Council of Ch., Phila., Pa.  
 Oct. 31 Arch St. Meth. Ch. Young Adult group (workshop & vesper)  
 Nov. 14 at Trinity Episcopal Ch., Hamilton, O. Youth group workshop  
 Nov. 21 Thanksgiving Processional (29 boys & girls) Epis. Ch., Athens, O. Excellent music for movement: "Sing to the Lord of Harvest" by Jane Marshall (Boardman Press)  
 Dec. 1 Chr. Program for Episcopal Women, Athens, O. (group presented "Snow Lay on the Ground", "Holly and Ivy", "Lord's Prayer" by Robertson.  
 Dec. 7 Half hour TV program taped at WBNS-TV, Columbus, O. for series on "Religious Dimensions" - this one on sacred dance Excellent group of H.S. and Ohio Univ. students, also Ann Borders, dance instructor at O.U. The University group danced "Eili, Eili" and "Isolation-Relatedness" (3 men, 4 women). Psalm 23, choreographed by Joan Wickstrom, was danced by 3 H.S. girls. Other numbers included "Now the Green Blade Riseth", "In Christ there is no East or West" and "The Lord's Prayer" (Robertson). Three races were involved; also the participants were from various churches: 2 Roman Catholic, 1 Lutheran, 4 Episcopalian, 2 Presbyterian, 2 Methodist, 1 E.U.B. and 1 Unitarian! I hope this may be made available for other stations. Feel free to write to the station WBNS-TV, Columbus, O.  
 Dec. 19 Carols in service: "All Praise to Thee" Christmas version of Tallis' Canon, "I Wonder as I Wander" (19 participants) at Episcopal Church, Athens, O.  
 Dec. 26 Carol: "Good Christian Men Rejoice" with 4 boys and 4 girls at the morning service.

This winter &amp; spring:

- Jan. 22 - in Baltimore for Workshop for Meth. Children's Workers  
 Jan. 23 - Workshop at Bells Meth. Ch. in afternoon, Washington, DC.  
 Mar. 12, 13 - Fairlawn Com. Ch., Akron, O. (workshop & vesper)  
 Mar. 23 - Chapel Service for Otterbein College, Westerville, O.  
 Apr. 1 - First Cong'l. Ch. Women, Columbus, O.  
 Apr. 23 - Workshop at Ashland Ave. Baptist Ch. for Toledo Council of Churches, Toledo, O.  
 May 15 • Selections for Worship Service at Episcopal Ch., Athens, O.  
 This summer: Workshops and Conferences:  
 June 26-July 2 - C.F.O., Wesley College, Dover, Del.  
 July 8, 9 at Baptist Lab. School, Green Lake, Wisc.  
 July 11-15 for Choristers Guild, Colorado Woman's College, Denver  
 Aug. 8-12 " " " " Salem College, Winston-Salem, N.C.

Barbara Beach, wife of the Unitarian minister in Marblehead, Mass., a dance educator has edited a new Manual on Sacred Dance for the Unitarian Universalist Association, the Department of Education. This was motivated by a need for Junior High Activity. Robert J. Storer has written the introduction to this Manual which will be available now at: Unitarian-Universalist Assoc., 25 Beacon St., Boston, Mass. We need more manuals and this should be valuable. Mrs. Beach has a group of Junior High girls who will introduce sacred dance in the old meeting house this Christmas wearing leotards and dance skirts.



## WHAT OUR MEMBERS ARE DOING

Diana Avery, 8251 S.W. 124th St., Miami, Fla., dir. of the Sacred Dance Guild of Miami, writes:

"In early November our 25-min. TV tape that was presented last year on WCKT, Ch. 7, was re-run. We were then asked by Caesar LaMonaca to perform with his orchestra at the Bayfront Park Bandshell in Miami for their Thanksgiving Day program. He asked that we perform a portion of Sibelius' "Finlandia" and "The Lord's Prayer". Reverend Neil Wyrick, Jr. pastor of the Palmetto Presbyterian Church in South Miami, on behalf of the Greater Miami Council of Churches, asked us to participate in "The Singing Christmas Tree." Our dancers choreographed and danced these carols: "A Child is Born in Bethlehem" "the Babe" (Mexican) and "Sing We Noel Once More" (Bas-Quercy Carol). Preceding this Christmas program we appeared in a 30 min. program over WLBW, Ch. 10 with Mr. Wyrick."

Priscilla Baxter, of the Congregational Church, Manchester, Conn., tells of the Rhythmic Choir presenting an Advent Service at Emanuel Lutheran Church in Manchester. "The Call to Worship was a procession-al and was newly choreographed for this service - O Be Joyful by Glarum, based on Psalm 100 - very lilting and allowing much freedom of movement.

During November and December the Girls' Choir presented services of worship for Women's Fellowship groups in Enfield and Stafford Spring. Our Women's Choir gave a special Christmas service for fellowship meetings in Tolland and in our own church.

Millie Slier, 49 Peacock Ln., No. Babylon, N.Y. writes: "The Rhythmic Choir at Babylon Methodist Church presented 3 dances for Christmas Pageant. Portions from Britten's "Ceremony of Carols" were the most effective.

I am happy and proud to announce that dance is now a part of the church school curriculum in our church. We also have a newly formed Com on Performing Arts.

WORKSHOP AT FIRST METHODIST CHURCH, GRAND RAPIDS, MICH., DEC. 2, 1965  
Experience Anonyme group was the highlight of the workshop which included 20 youth choir members, 18 leaders of youth choirs and adult groups, 16 non choir participants and 3 ministers from various Michigan churches. Forrest Coggan, Drid Williams and Virginia Lucke were the main leaders.

During the 4:30 to 6 period: Coggan outlined history of religious dance, Virginia led group in movements for Doxology, technique, and 1st Meth. Liturgical and E. Cong'l. Ch. Rhythmic Choir demonstrated their creative works. Question and answer period. Experience Anonyme group did Psalm 8 & Psalm 123 with time for discussion over the use of certain formations, such as triangle for Trinity, double tringle, weaving into single and double lines, etc.

After supper Experience Anonyme group presented full worship service: Circle Dance - contemporary American ethnic ritual dance  
Invocation - procession with lighted candles

Lord's Prayer - Malotte

Sheep May Safely Graze (Bach) - Abstract, non-literal movements

Psalms: 138, 123, 8

Sleepers Awake (Bach)

Song of Songs (Hovannes)

Such regional workshops are most valuable; Michigan leads in this.



10.

A LETTER TO THE EDITOR asking for comments on a term paper by a student at the University of Illinois:

Question -- SHOULD MODERN DANCE HAVE A PLACE IN THE PROTESTANT RELIGIOUS SERVICE IN THE SAME WAY AS MUSIC AND SONGS DO?

My comment: More of the congregation is able to sing and enter into congregational singing - so, singing has a vantage point. Modern dance could deserve a place "the same as music" if it would be presented in movements simple enough that persons in the congregation could feel themselves able to move with the dancers. It would be in such dance-in-depth that it would not be a spectacle to be observed but meaningful symbolic movement involving the people. Modern dance should have a place in special services in the church as religious drama and special oratorios and contemporary jazz, etc. and gradually it will be clear how much and what type of adaptation of modern dance belong in the services. Protestant services are not uniform; so some churches may welcome modern dance while others may avoid it completely.

Statement of problem -- THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY IS TO DETERMINE IF MODERN DANCE WILL ADD TO THE SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE OF A RELIGIOUS CONGREGATION.

My comment: Modern dance of itself will not add the spiritual dimension, but the dancers themselves may add to the spiritual experience not only through their creative work but through their whole being. Modern dance of itself has no magic. (Will water cleanse a wound? Only if it is pure.) If persons have depth, concern and discipline and find that their clearest vehicle for communication is through modern dance - then there will be added some enrichment to the spiritual experience of a congregation that can identify itself with the mood of the dancers.

Hypothesis -- MODERN DANCE CAN OFFER A MOVING SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE FOR MEMBERS OF A RELIGIOUS CONGREGATION AND SHOULD BE INCLUDED AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF TODAY'S PROTESTANT RELIGIOUS SERVICE.

My comment: Modern dance in itself cannot offer a spiritual experience, but modern dancers - if they are concerned and spiritually disciplined - have the potential to offer a moving spiritual experience for members of a congregation. So, opportunities should be offered so that their works may be included as enrichment in today's protestant services. If modern dancers can prove that they have insight and depth and comprehend the religious concerns of today, and if the congregation grows to understand them in this dimension, then they will be naturally included as an integral part of the religious service. It will be a growing experience for both the dancers and the members of the congregation.

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THE PEACE CORPS' first venture in the performing arts is now being organized. The governments of Venezuela, Costa Rica, Panama and Chile have requested volunteers with backgrounds in theatre, music and dance. Further information may be obtained from Peace Corps, Arts Desk, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C. 20525. Let us hope that this first venture will be continued.



## PAPER DOLL PEOPLE

Shirley Fritz and the Rhythmic Choir at the Church of the Brethren, West Milton, Ohio, explored a new dimension in worship for youth night at the District Conference of Brethren on November 6.

"Paper Doll People", a poetic meditation by Jean Ohman, appeared in the Brethren Messenger (Sept. 2, 1965) and this was the base for the dramatic movement which evolved from the probing consideration by Shirley and the Choir. The members of the choir wore black tights and leotards with newspaper print tunics. She writes: "I bought white drip dry cotton and had the print run off at the Troy Daily News Office! The production manager was so congenial and we had fun letting the presses roll out our own material newsprint."

Here are fragment glimpses into the script and some of the dramatic action:

- A. "How do you build a tomorrow on a thin, threatened today?  
There are no tools to borrow, just a sack full of paper-mache  
Because people are paper dolls . . . ."  
(On the floor in "plops of nothingness" positions. All lights out in the church except for a green light on group. Narrator. Music on tape from Y Teens of Bellfontaine, Ohio - contemporary music with differing moods - monotonous, mechanical, shattering, powerful.)  
"Paper doll people are safe in their sameness -- safe and soft and spineless . . . .  
Paper dolls consuming . . . bitter black coffee and coke and smoke .  
People speaking at each other in copycat conversations . . . .
- B. "How do you build a tomorrow on such a thin, threatened today?  
where . . . culture is a Broadway play . . .  
music is a twist -- a tortured disc . . .  
discipline is 2000 calories a day . . .  
honesty is a required tax statement  
compassion is a welfare office . . .  
(During this a red light is flashing. Some jazz steps used)
- C. "How do you build a tomorrow on today's paper values  
vended to paper people to paste upon their differences  
and cover them with a colorless, predictable pattern? . . .  
What happened to people with purpose and pulses . . .  
(Individuals in struggle to face issues or to avoid decisions.)
- D. "The paper must be split, the pattern broken . . .  
So real people appear  
with eyes uncovered . . . minds unleashed. . .  
Real people who know  
loveliness in a listening face . . .  
friendship in one unlike the self . . .  
compassion touches close at hand to spread itself across a land.  
("Real persons" emerge, work in pairs)
- E. "Peel the paper to the person beneath . . .  
Probe to the real people . . . each special . . . each needed . . .  
Real people . . . with hearts to leap in love for another  
to despair in grief for another. . .  
Real people each God-designed, one of a kind,  
must rebuild a today strong enough to reach a tomorrow."

(continued next page)



12.  
PAPER DOLL PEOPLE (continued)

(Individuals communicate meanings; then gather in a leaping of joyous caring for each other. The caring and concern representing the ultimate for mankind is continued by the "real people" of the choir go up the aisles of the sanctuary and out into the world.)

Here, in a small town, is this group with no dance training, but with imagination, tremendous depth and willingness to work day after day together. A mixture of poetry, music, lighting, movement in dedication to communicate a problem of present-day living brought right into the sanctuary.

An overwhelming response by both leaders and laymen has brought new encouragement to Shirley and this choir to continue in such creative work. Write Shirley, Rt. #3, Troy, Ohio for more details.

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TWO WORKSHOPS ON DANCE AS PART OF THE CONFERENCE TO BROADEN CREATIVE INVOLVEMENT IN THE CHURCH (Mass. Bay District Unitarian Universalist Churches) held on Burlington Campus of Northeastern Univ., Dec. 4.

The Place of Dance in Worship at adult level

Panel discussion: chairman Mrs. Carol Taylor, R.E. Dir. of First Parish Church in Arlington, Mass.; Rev. John Skierik; Al Pessa, a professional dancer and director of a school; Mrs. Aubrey, a member of Rel. Ed. Com.; Mrs. Barbara Beach, a minister's wife and a trained dancer; and Mrs. Barbara Marshman, R.E. Dir. of the Winchester Church. There was active interplay in the discussion between audience and panelists. (See bottom of page 15 for questions discussed on panel)

Following this there was a presentation of two types of religious dance. The Motion Choir of Dorchester, whose director is Carol Davis, presented their beautifully moving "Twenty-third Psalm". The dancers of the Pessa School who present religious dance at the Charles St. Meeting House in Boston, presented the rapidly moving and joyful work of a Bach Chorale.

The Second Workshop was conducted by Mrs. Florence Whipple who has taught dance in elementary schools. She contributed to the exploring of various types of motion and ways of using limited space.

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NOAMI ALEH-LEAF pushed another step forward in her purpose of seeking to re-establish the dance within the Jewish temple. On December 10, Naomi and her Festival Dancers were part of the Sabbath Eve Service of Temple Beth Am in Framingham, Mass. This service was important in opening their Tenth Anniversary Year of Rededication. The Service was not changed, but Naomi adapted her dances as an enlargement of the Prayers. The opening hymn and the processional of dancers was fused in flowing motion, and the Blessing of the Candles and the Adoration of the Ark were enhanced and made whole by the motions of the dancers who used gestures enlarged from the Cantors' original movements. In place of the sermon, Miss Aleh-Leaf spoke briefly on the use of the dance in the service. Rabbi Alfred L. Friedman said that he hopes that the use of dance in the Reformed Temple will be stimulated.

THE DANCERS OF FAITH; directed by LOUISE MATTLAGE :

March 4 at 7:30 at Trumbell Congregational Church in Trumbell, Conn.  
Jan. 30 at 7 P.M. at Christianna Presbyterian Church, Delaware.

Feb. 13 Ruth Currier gives a lecture demonstration and master class at the Chester Art Assoc. in West Chester, Pa. (open to public)



## NEWS ITEMS

DANCING IN CHURCH was the title of a syndicated article that appeared in many Sunday supplements across the country on Dec. 12. The subtitle was: "It's only one of a series of far-out innovations now altering Sunday worship". Actually there was very little said about "Dancing in Church" aside from the title of the article by Neal Ashby. One article did carry a photograph of six girls kneeling before the altar in the Melrose Highlands, Mass. Congregational Church and entitled it "Unique Dance Choir." Another article was identical except that this photograph was not included. In the main article reference is made to the Rev. William Bell Glenesk who "stepped before his congregation wearing leotards one Sunday and danced 'The Hermit Song' to convey religious feeling." The article covers new ways of communicating through jazz, drama, and visual aids, etc. At least "Dancing in Church" took the title, but I doubt if readers would learn much about it.

DANCE AT THE VATICAN is the title of a paragraph describing a photograph in DANCE MAGAZINE, December 1965. "Commissioned by the Vatican, Spanish dancer-choreographer Luisillo created a ballet based on a parable of St. Luke, performed in Rome on Sept. 27 in the Clementine Salon of the Vatican - the first dance performed there in more than four centuries. In an audience afterwards, His Holiness, the Pope, presented commemorative medallions to Luisillo, to composer Federico Torroba and designer Carlos Viadaurra." In the photograph it is the Pope who has the open outgoing gesture.

CHURCH DANCE TELLS ANNUNCIATION STORY was the title of an article in the December 6 issue of the Rochester Democrat with the writer Mary McKee.

"An ancient form of worship told an ancient tale yesterday at Spencer Ripley Methodist Church.

The story of the Annunciation . . . was danced in the chapel. . . . Five blue robed barefoot young dancers entered from doors at both sides of the chancel area. Four knelt at one side; another stood near the center.

Rev. Fletcher Bryant, associate minister, arose and spoke the familiar words from Luke: "Hail, favored one . . .

But his words were soon distant, almost unheard, and unneeded. The story of Gabriel's visit, his prediction and reassurance unfolded in the fluid movements of the rhythmic choir. Worshipers were at once transported back. . .

Then, as the choir sang "Silent Night", the dancers gave new meaning to the traditional words, "Sleep in heavenly peace."

Earlier in the service Rev. Allen G. Skiff, pastor, recalled the historical significance of religious dance.

"Let me remind you," he said, "that movement of the body was the first way man expressed his spiritual concern . . . sometimes in fear, sometimes in awe and adoration."

The rhythmic choir was organized by Sylvia Bryant, wife of the associate pastor, a little over a year ago. . . .

The petite graduate of Tuskegee Institute explained that dance is a form of communication in which the whole body is used to convey an idea or feeling. She emphasized that in religious dance one is "creating adoration from inner feeling" rather than performing, as on a stage.

"If you don't have the inner feeling," Mrs. Bryant observed,  
(over)



## CHURCH DANCE TELLS STORY (continued)

"you won't get through. Dancers perform on stage, but in church you hope the congregation will share in this ritual experience."

The choreography is based on "selection, study, creation alone and finally, with the dancers," explained Mrs. Bryant, assistant program director of the health education department at the YWCA. Before any material is presented to the dancers, she said, she examines the music, or text; discusses the theological implications with her husband, and then works out the choreography." (A good photograph was included with the article.)

CONFRONTATION FROM THE BOOK OF JOB was the work presented on Oct. 17 over Lamp Unto My Feet CBS-TV. The oratorio composed by William Bergsma, performed by the Mid-American Chorale under the direction of John Dexter at Plymouth Congregational Church in Des Moines, Ia. Included was a dance interpretation of the dialogue between God and Job, performed by Everett Mays (Job) and John Thompson (God). Everett Mays' interpretation of Job in his anguish was strong and powerful. The decision to present God as a combination of Santa Claus heavily bearded, Blake's drawings and conventional old-time paintings and with slow zombie-like gestures was regrettable. It might have been less painful to let Job confront Satan.

(When we presented: "Job, the perennial problem of suffering" with Dartmouth students in Hanover, N.H. in 1950 we included Job, his wife, the messenger, and the three friends, but we did not try to visualize Satan or God. However the "confrontation" of Job before God was clear and forceful, for Job (Ed Balin) reflected (after the agony period) the gradual awareness of God's unlimited power and the sharp insights into God's immediacy. There was no need for a ghostly, grotesque figure to "appear" before Job. So, if this oratorio is repeated, perhaps the combination of the music with the dance-in-depth by Job will prove more meaningful in the confrontation. ) - - - (comment by your editor)

THE FOUNDATION OF THE ARTS, RELIGION AND CULTURE sponsored a presentation of "The Contemporary Dance: 3 Points of View" at Carnegie Recital Hall on Oct. 14. Merce Cunningham, Jean Erdman and Lucas Hoving discussed and demonstrated their dance identities. . . Mr. Cunningham emphasized his approach to dance as essentially a mystical one, equating the daily class with "the act of devotion" and the creation of a work as a quest for "the renewal of ecstasy." Miss Erdman delineated her attraction to the theatrical qualities inherent in character, underlining her point by performing an old crone's dance from her Coach with the Six Insides. Mr. Hoving, with some wonderment, confessed that almost anything - a provocative piece of music, a newspaper item, a specific quality of character - set his creative machinery going. His demonstration seemed to highlight the emphasis of the evening: "that the dancer speaks most meaningfully through his dances."

(This report is from Jacqueline Maskey's review of the meeting as written in Dance Magazine, December 1965)

KEYNOTES TO MODERN DANCE, is a new book by Dorothy Koch Norris and Reva P. Shiner, Burgess Publishing Co., Minn., Minn. \$3.90.

A basic text for beginning and intermediate classes. Planned sequentially from single basic movements through developing pattern and short projects and into composition. Creative clues; suggested sources for dance ideas.



News items:

Joyce Peel in Madras, India has used sacred dance in connection with her interest in communicating Christianity through dramatic ways. She writes of the Christians in North India and a visit to a tribal area, Chota Nagpur. "The people there were animists and they swept into the Church in large numbers. They own their own tribal lands and are a vigorous and independent people. They performed their tribal dances for me making me join in, and I was touched by their tribal welcome which consisted not only of garlanding, but of washing the visitor's hands, and flicking water on the body with a fresh leaf. It was wonderful to see their great Cathedral packed with adults all communicating." Our blessing to Joyce as she enters into the life of the people in her witnessing.

Mary Tsukamoto of Sacramento, Calif. tells of the Christmas program on "Christmas in Other Lands" at the Kennedy Grade School. "Reiko, who had come from Japan only three months before, in fifth grade now, danced in her colorful kimono to the universally loved Silent Night using two fans in restrained movements."

Frances Banks, director of the Rhythmic Choir at the Church of the Open Door, Webster Groves, Mo., writes: that her Rhythmic Choir presented a Christmas Program on "The Christmas Story" with two H.S. boys as narrators - one a Biblical reader and the other reading the story as Christmas in 1965. For the installation of their new minister, the choir interpreted "The Statement of Faith" (United Church of Christ). Mrs. Bank's oldest daughter has a large Rhythmic Choir at the Congregational Church in Auburndale, Mass. where her husband is associate minister.

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The Mass. Bay District Sub Com. on Dance announces a PROGRAM OF FREE DANCING LESSONS available to interested persons. A rare opportunity for Sacred Dance Leaders, Sacred Dance Groups, Motion Choirs or persons interested in dance for their own pleasure!

The Place: CHARLES STREET MEETING HOUSE, 70 Charles St., Boston, Mass.

The Dates: Jan. 26; Feb. 2,9,16,23; March 2,9,16,23,30; April 6,13

Wednesday evenings 8:30 - 10 P.M.

The Teachers: Diane Pessio, Barbara Beach.

To Register: Write to Mrs. Carol Taylor, 46 Woodside Lane, Arlington, Mass. 02174

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PANEL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS USED AT THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONF. HELD AT NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY, Dec.4 (see middle of page 12)

1. What are the qualities of dance which make it meaningful?
2. Is there any distinction between religious (sacred) dance and modern interpretive dance?
3. In what sense can dance be meaningful experience for the non-dancer in the church community (What can it say to a congregation)?
4. How do you judge a dance for worship service use - from what criterion are you critical?
5. In what sense is dance an educational experience?
6. Does dance provide a singularly unique way of expressing emotions?
7. To what depth of feeling can you go in communicating with a group of young children?

(Yes, I wish we knew what was said in response to these questions!)



\* \* \* \* \* SACRED DANCE GUILD JUNE INSTITUTE \* \* \* \* \*

for all dancers, dance choir directors, ministers and students

SAVE THESE DATES NOW: JUNE 21, 22, 23

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sharing together . . . learning together and . . .  
dancing together for two and a half days . . .  
plus the stimulation of trained leaders, both in  
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THEME: THE RELIGIOUS YEAR AND THE DANCE

A Rabbi, a Unitarian minister and a Christian minister will discuss  
the Christian and Jewish year plus the Social Concerns and Art in  
church life as related to the Dance.

GUEST DANCE TEACHERS: NOAMI ALEH-LEAF, Swampscott, Mass.  
CORA MILLER WELLS, Cincinnati, Ohio

Both are performers and teachers with years of experience in  
Religious Dance . Both will lead us in dance interpretations drawn  
from the Religious Year.

THE SACRED DANCE JUNE INSTITUTE means a new experience both in  
depth for the person as well as new heights for the dancer.

RATES: Guild Members	\$25	participating in workshops
Non members	\$30	" " "
Family members	\$19	not participating in workshops
		(a good vacation place for all ages)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: Write to Mrs. Robert W. Sonen, 47 Cleve-  
land St., Orange, New Jersey  
REGISTER NOW OR BEFORE MAY 20. Send registrations to Mrs. Sonen.

Last year our notices were out too late for you to plan ahead and  
advance registrations were so late that the June Institute was can-  
celled! Don't let that happen again! Write to Pat Sonen for more  
information and tell her you plan to come with your family, your  
choir members and your minister and all your friends!

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A REQUEST FROM YOUR EDITOR:

Please let me know of any summer workshops or conferences in your  
area or in your denomination's plans where sacred dance or motion  
choir will be taught. I would like to list these in the April  
Newsletter. That means that I must have this information before  
April 8. Send any news as soon as you get any information.

Of course I am glad to get information about your own activities  
as usual, but keep alert to inform our membership of any other  
workshops besides the special June Institute of the Sacred Dance  
Guild.  
Margaret Taylor